

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

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US EPA RECORDS CENTER REGION 5



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DATE: September 26, 1980

SUBJECT: Interlake Steel Wetland Fill (near Torrence Ave. between 110th & 116th Streets, Chicago)

FROM: Robert L. Stone *RLS*

TO: THE FILES

On June 26, 1980, I (Robert Stone) made an inspection of an active landfill site located about 1/4 mile west of Torrence Avenue, between 110th & 116th Streets, Chicago, Illinois. I was accompanied by Allen K. Bauman (US EPA, Enforcement Division, 886-6768) and Mark Burke, (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, District Office, 219 S. Dearborn, Room 623, Chicago, Illinois; 353-6465).

We entered the area by way of the 103rd Street gate of the C&NW freight yard, then southerly along the railroad right of way to about 110th Street.

I observed 3 man-made lagoons along the west edge of the railroad right of way, and what appeared to be a fourth lagoon in the making. - i.e. there was fresh fill at the end of an incomplete dike (see sketch). Of the 3 completed lagoons, the northern one measured about 300 feet by 750 feet, and 12 to 15 feet deep. It was surrounded by sandy gravel, and contained water about 1 foot deep. There was a water pump at the southwestern corner of the lagoon. A flexible 4" discharge hose was laying on the dike, and there was a large eroded area where water had been discharged from the hose into the open water to the west of the dike (see pictures # ).

The main part of the lagoon in the middle measured about 600 feet by 700 feet, and was filled to within 1 to 2 feet of the top of the dikes, and to within 1 foot of a 14" steel pipe culvert leading through the west dike into the open water. (frame #14) The water in the lagoon was clear. There was also a pump (frame #15) which discharged into a 14" culvert leading to the open water west of the lagoon (frame #5).

The middle lagoon also extended about 300 feet south and connected with the ditch on the west side of the railroad right of way. This ditch extended about 1/4 mile south. (See frames 8-9, and #4-5-6-7).

The third (southernmost) lagoon was much smaller (30 feet by 300 feet), and was plainly the site of recent dumping and filling. The water was shallow, about a foot in most places, and was heavily covered with oily, black liquid which was draining off of the dark black oily sludge along the southern edge of the lagoon. I took several pictures of this. The sludge was very viscous and had

oozed down the face of the fill into the water. Mark Burke accidentally stepped onto the edge of the sludge and immediately sunk in several inches. Some of the viscous sludge had been partially covered with clean grey/white gravel, over which subsequent loads had been driven. This was evident from truck tire tracks and sludge oozing up through the gravel. The filled area covered an area estimated by me to be 800 feet by 2100 feet (approx. 40 acres) more or less. There was a narrow (10-20 foot) ditch between this filled area and the railroad right-of-way. The water in the ditch appeared clear, and there were many line cattails in it at its northern end, (i.e. near the heavily contaminated lagoon), this ditch widened to 100' and was separated by a low sand/mud dike not over 3 or 4 inches above the contaminated water. (See pictures # ) This heavily contaminated water was separated from the middle lagoon by an irregular sand/gravel dike which varied in width from 2 to 10 feet and in height above the water from 1/2 to 4 feet. (See Pictures # )

We drove further south along the railroad to 116th Street then west to closed gate to the property described above. At that time, a large truck entered the property from 116th Street and we followed through the then open gate. (a red Hendrickson Tractor - trailer belonging to M & R Trucking, trailer license 28547ST (Illinois), tractor #290)

The truck driver unloaded gravel onto a dike between the northern lagoon and the unfinished lagoon. I took several photographs of this, then we left the property.

I personally took the film to Astra Photo Service, 6 E. Lake St., Chicago, about 2:30 pm the same day, for overnight processing. I personally picked up the prints and negatives the following day at 4 pm, and initialed and dated each print on the back "RLS 6-26-80".

I later examined the land ownership records at the City - County Building and determined the owners of the area we inspected to be Interlake Corporation, Oakbrook, Illinois.